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Recommended Citation

Southwestern Oklahoma State University, "2018-2019 Service Learning Report" (2019). *Assessment Center Reports*. 92.

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2018-2019 Service Learning Report

Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Campus Compact - National Inventory for Institutional Infrastructure on Community
Engagement (NI³CE)



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Contents

2018-2019 Service Learning Report.....	1
SWOSU Service Learning.....	3
Definitions	3
Newman Civic Fellowship	3
Institutional Information.....	4
Institutional Highlights.....	4
NI ³ CE	5
Live National Dataset Comparison.....	5
References	6

SWOSU Service Learning

In 2004, Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) joined the Campus Compact coalition, a partnership of over 1,000 colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. SWOSU shares the ideals of Campus Compact, building democracy through civic education and community service (Campus Compact, n.d.)

Definitions

Community engagement: For the purposes of this survey, the definition of *community engagement* follows the one used for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification: The collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

Community-based learning: All credit-bearing learning experiences in which student action on behalf of community goals is a significant component of the learning process. Community - based learning includes practices such as service-learning and community -based research, along with other pedagogies through which students participate in advocacy, electoral processes, community dialogue, or other similar activities.

Campus Compact promotes student community engagement that is either **curricular** (occurring as an aspect of a credit-bearing academic experience) or **co-curricular**. At SWOSU, curricular community engagement is synonymous with the term **service-learning**. Co-curricular activities are synonymous with the term **community engagement**.

Newman Civic Fellowship

SWOSU students are afforded many opportunities through our Campus Compact affiliation, including a one-year fellowship for community-committed students. Newman Civic Fellowship learning outcomes include 1) support for students in their personal, civic, and professional development to prepare them for the long-term work of public problem solving and building equitable communities, and 2) building a network of civically-oriented college student leaders and alumni characterized by vibrant and productive relationships (Campus Compact, n.d.).

Kamuela Ahuna serves as SWOSU's current Newman Civic Fellow. Kam has been active at SWOSU in many campus and community-based projects. Coming from a small Oklahoma high school, Kam is committed to providing a pathway to STEM fields for other rural students. To that end, he is actively involved in the SWOSU Computer Club and a computer science camp for area high school students. As a mentor and role model to fellow students, he provides information on accessibility to higher education and to STEM fields of study. He is a volunteer at the First Tech Challenge Robotics competition and represents the university as a member of the SWOSU Marching Band. As a member of the President's Leadership Class, Kam is active in many civic engagement events, including fighting childhood hunger through the Backpack for

Kids program at a local elementary school. Kam is supported by his university mentor, Hayden Harrington.

Institutional Information

NSSE founding director George Kuh promotes the use of high-impact practices (HIP) of instruction to enhance the undergraduate experience. He specifically suggests that all institutions strive to incorporate one HIP during the freshman year and one in the context of major courses (NSSE, 2018). For the purposes of this report, HIPs include service-learning, a learning community, and research with faculty. SWOSU uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as an indirect measure of student engagement through service learning courses. The NSSE is annually administered to freshmen and seniors at SWOSU. The 2018 NSSE indicated that 48% of SWOSU freshmen reported participating in at least one HIP and 7% reported participating in two or more. A majority of senior students, 60%, reported participating in two or more HIPs, while 30% participated in at least one high-impact practice.

The University began implementation of a new ERP system, one in which service-learning courses may be designated. Students have the ability to search by this criterion in order to discover service-learning courses more effectively. Faculty members may submit their course for service-learning designation by completing an online application which documents the following tenets: 1) There is an identified need on the part of a community partner; 2) Students in the course can address that need; 3) The service-learning project meets specific course objective(s) and students receive course credit for the activity; 4) The students are required to complete a reflective activity about the service learning experience and to complete the online SWOSU Student Report Form.

SWOSU's B.L.U.E. Cord Initiative – Bulldogs Learning, Understanding, Empowering – continues. Students may earn the graduation honor cord by completing 9-credit hours of service-learning courses. Since its inception in spring 2018, 11 university students have proudly worn this cord at commencement.

Institutional Highlights

During the 2018-2019 academic year, a total of 765 students completed service-learning reporting forms. This computes to approximately 17% of full-time equivalent students, an increase from the 10% reported the previous year. The increase was due, in part, by an intentional university initiative. In order to increase freshmen participation in a high impact practice and to introduce students to Service Learning, SWOSU New Student Orientation and the Service Learning Coordinator collaborated to implement a Service Learning module in the first year experience course, SWOSU Connect. The module included participation in SWOSU Serves Saturday, a day of service in the community. Participating students completed a written pre-reflection prior to the activity and a reflection response upon completion of the service-learning experience, following the design of Jacoby's (2015) model for critical reflection. Students were provided with discussion board rubrics in order to guide their pre-reflection and reflection responses. Jacoby (2015) states, "Providing rubrics that concretely describe critical reflection...are helpful to students" and that this form of methodology is "an effective strategy [combining] several reflection modes [that are] continuous, connected, challenging, and contextualized" (p. 32). As part of the reflective activity, students were asked *How have you*

changed as a result of this service-learning experience? The top four responses included 1) more collaboration skills; 2) enjoyment in helping others; 3) increased respect for others; 4) more appreciation for peers. In response to the second prompt *How will these changes affect your future behaviors?* students responded with 1) inspiration to do more community service; 2) expression of more gratitude; 3) improved attitude; 4) willingness to try new things. This data supports the student learner outcome of this activity which states, *Students will use critical reflection to examine the personal impact of service-learning* (Boyd, Boyd, & Alexander, in press).

NI³CE

Campus Compact recently partnered with the National Inventory for Institutional Infrastructure on Community Engagement (NI³CE, NIIICE), administered by Brown University's Swearer Center. The Swearer Center builds upon community strengths by engaging scholars, students, practitioners, and community members. The NI³CE is a free institutional assessment tool to map infrastructure of campuses (Brown University, n.d.).

Live National Dataset Comparison

The Swearer Center provides institutions with a Live National Dataset for selected questions on the NI³CE survey document. Table 1 compares the national dataset to institutional responses.

Table 1

Question	National Dataset	SWOSU
Does your institution have dedicated funding for community engagement?	94% - yes 6% - no	No
Is there a clear institutional reporting line for community engagement on your campus?	92% - yes 8% - no	Yes
What is the current center director's [service-learning coordinator's] degree?	41% - terminal degree 45% - master's degree 14% - other	Terminal degree (Ed.D.)
Does your institution hold the Carnegie Foundations' Community Engagement Classification?	52% - yes 48% - no	No

[Link to live national dataset](#)

References

Brown University (n.d.) *National Inventory for Institutional Infrastructure on Community Engagement*. Retrieved July 1, 2019, [online](#).

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